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INFO ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 002267

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/28/2017  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [KPAL](#) [PBTS](#) [KWBG](#) [IS](#) [JO](#)  
SUBJECT: GOJ REPUDIATES FEDERATION PROPOSALS

REF: TEL AVIV 1331

CLASSIFIED BY: AMBASSADOR DAVID HALE FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

11. (C) SUMMARY: KING ABDULLAH AND JORDANIAN OFFICIALS ARE ATTEMPTING TO DISTANCE THE GOJ FROM A JORDANIAN SENATOR'S SUGGESTION TO ISRAELI POLITICIANS THAT IT IS WORTH EXPLORING A JORDANIAN-PALESTINIAN FEDERATION BEFORE PALESTINIAN STATEHOOD. HOWEVER, THE KING'S RECENT ENGAGEMENT WITH PROMINENT ISRAELIS AND PALESTINIANS HAS INADVERTENTLY FED THE SUSPICIONS OF CONSPIRACY-MINDED PALESTINIANS IN JORDAN (AND LIKELY BEYOND) THAT THE HASHEMITES ARE READYING SOME NEW INITIATIVE THAT WILL UNDERCUT ARAB CONSENSUS IN SUPPORT OF A SOVEREIGN PALESTINIAN STATE. END SUMMARY.

12. (U) JORDANIAN SENATOR (AND FORMER PM) ABDUL SALAM AL-MAJALI RECENTLY VISITED ISRAEL (REFTEL) AND SUGGESTED TO A NUMBER OF ISRAELI POLITICIANS A NEW LOOK AT THE CONCEPT OF A FEDERATION OF SOME KIND BETWEEN JORDAN AND PALESTINIAN AREAS. THIS WAS NOT THE FIRST TIME MAJALI HAS FLOATED THE CONCEPT; HE HAS DONE SO PREVIOUSLY IN ISRAEL AND IN WASHINGTON. KING ABDULLAH AND OTHER GOJ SPOKESMEN HAVE MADE A POINT OF REPUDIATING THE IDEA BOTH PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY.

13. (C) UPON HIS RETURN FROM ISRAEL, MAJALI WAS INSTRUCTED BY THE KING'S TOP AIDES TO RETRACT HIS SUPPORT OF THE PROPOSAL.

14. (U) MAJALI APPEARED ON JORDANIAN STATE TELEVISION SHORTLY AFTER HIS RETURN AND REITERATED THE OFFICIAL GOJ POSITION AT SOME LENGTH.

15. (U) IN A MAY 10 INTERVIEW WITH EGYPT'S AL-AHRAM WEEKLY, KING ABDULLAH, WHEN ASKED ABOUT REVIVED TALK OF A FEDERATION, REPLIED "ANY DISCUSSION OF FEDERATION OR CONFEDERATION IS PREMATURE . . . THE FORM OF THE FUTURE OFFICIAL JORDANIAN-PALESTINIAN RELATIONSHIP IS SOMETHING TO BE DECIDED BY BOTH AFTER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE."

16. (U) IN PART AS A FURTHER EFFORT TO DISTANCE HIMSELF FROM MAJALI'S SUGGESTION, KING ABDULLAH'S INDEPENDENCE DAY SPEECH ON MAY 26 PUT MORE EMPHASIS THAN USUAL ON JORDAN'S SUPPORT FOR A FULLY SOVEREIGN PALESTINIAN STATE.

17. (U) HOWEVER, THE RECENT FLURRY OF HIGH-PROFILE JORDANIAN-ISRAELI AND JORDANIAN-PALESTINIAN CONTACTS (WHICH ARE AIMED AT SUPPORTING THE SECRETARY'S PEACE EFFORTS AND ARE UNCONNECTED TO THE FEDERATION IDEA) HAVE INADVERTENTLY FED SPECULATION AMONG SOME JORDANIANS OF PALESTINIAN ORIGIN THAT THE GOJ IS PREPARING TO SHIFT ITS POSITION ON PALESTINIAN STATEHOOD, IN PART BECAUSE THOSE ACTIVITIES ARE UNCOORDINATED WITH THE PA. OVER THE PAST TWO MONTHS, THE KING HAS RECEIVED IN JORDAN THE PRESIDENT OF THE KNESSET (WHO WAS ACTING STATE PRESIDENT AT THE TIME), OTHER KNESSET MEMBERS, LEADERS OF JEWISH-AMERICAN GROUPS, AND PALESTINIAN AND ISRAELI PEACE ACTIVISTS, IN ADDITION TO PM OLMERT AT THE PETRA NOBEL LAUREATE GATHERING.

18. (C) WHATEVER DAMAGE CONTROL THE GOJ MAY CARRY OUT, THE HARM FROM MAJALI'S INITIATIVE HAS ALREADY BEEN DONE, FROM A JORDANIAN PERSPECTIVE. LIKUD LEADER BENJAMIN NETANYAHU, IN A MAY 24 FINANCIAL TIMES INTERVIEW, ENDORSED "SOME KIND OF FEDERATION OR CONFEDERATION BETWEEN JORDAN AND THE PALESTINIANS." AN MFA CONTACT TOLD POLCOUNS GLUMLY THAT HE NOW EXPECTED THOSE WHO SOUGHT AN ALTERNATIVE TO PALESTINIAN STATEHOOD TO RAISE THE FEDERATION IDEA REGULARLY. PERHAPS MORE IMPORTANTLY, THOSE IN THE ARAB CAMP WHO ALWAYS CRITICIZE GOJ ENGAGEMENT WITH ISRAELIS WILL FOOL MANY ON THE JORDANIAN STREET INTO BELIEVING THAT THE KING'S EFFORTS TO REVIVE THE PEACE PROCESS ARE REALLY AIMED AT REGAINING FOR THE GOJ A ROLE IN THE PALESTINIAN AREAS, A PROSPECT AS UNATTRACTIVE AND UNFEASIBLE TO PALESTINIAN-JORDANIANS AS IT IS TO EAST BANK JORDANIANS.

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